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Approved For Release 2003/04/24 : CIA-RDP79R01012A000600030006-5

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NIE-26

ONI Contributions to Paragraph II.A.1

The primary objective of Soviet penetration in the Near East is the supplanting of Western influence by Communist domination. This is in furtherance of the general Soviet aim of controlling the entire region, with its peoples, economies, strategic areas, and natural resources, especially petroleum. In pursuing their objective, the Soviets not only utilize the various Communist parties in the region but also exploit all dissident elements and other sources of cleavage.

Small but well organized Communist parties exist legally in Israel and Cyprus, and illegally in Greece, Lebanon, Syria, Iran, Iraq and Egypt. While these organizations constitute a network for subversion, sabotage and espionage under the control of an international apparatus, their capabilities are limited by governmental repression, difficulties of communication throughout the region, religious convictions, and general lack of political consciousness.

Communist techniques are used to exploit such disruptive factors in the region as: (1) Arab-Jewish hostility; (2) aspirations and grievances of various ethnic groups such as Azerbaijanis, Armenians, Kurds and Cypriot Greeks; (3) the influence of the Orthodox Church; (4) political groups (such as the Moslem Brotherhood and the Israeli Mapam Party) which might be inclined to cooperate with Communism; and (5) the general fear of Soviet armed strength.

In varying degrees, the entire Near East is vulnerable to Soviet penetration. This vulnerability is due to: (1) poor economic and social conditions aggravated by population increases; (2) growing labor movements; (3) corruption within governments; (4) decline of religious influence; and (5) a tendency to play one foreign power against another.

Soviet capabilities for sabotage of Near Eastern installations affecting U.S. security interests are considerable. Security measures at these installations, while improving to some extent, are still inadequate. A pattern of past and proposed sabotage has been reported.

ONI review(s) completed.

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